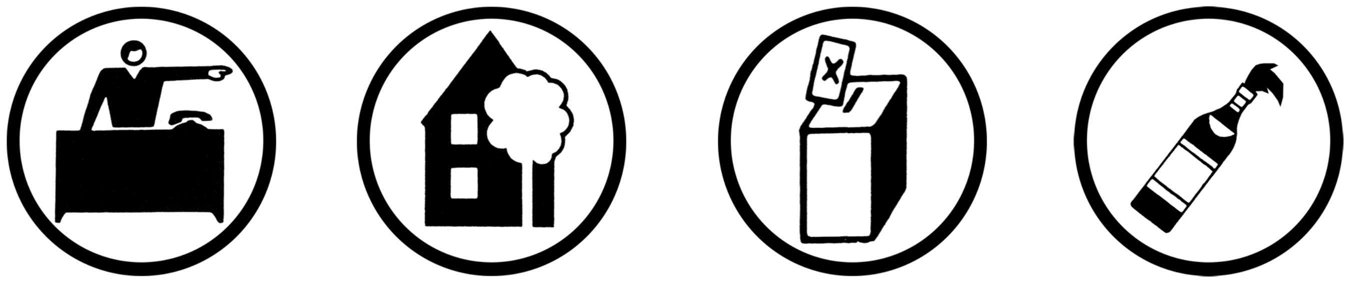
WORK
COMMUNITY
POLITICS
WAR



www.prole.info *pamphlets and online texts for the angry wage worker*

We grow more daring and more aggressive in pursuing our own class interests. These do not lie in forming a new government, or becoming the new boss. Our interests lie in ending our own way of life—and therefore the society that is based on that way of life.

We are the working class who want to abolish work and class. We are the community of people who want to tear the existing community apart. Our political program is to destroy politics. In order to do that, we have to push the subversive tendencies that exist today until we have completely remade society everywhere. This has at times been called "revolution".

"Everyone is asked their opinion about every detail in order to prevent them from having one about the totality."

Raoul Vaneigem

We look around us and see a world beyond our control.
Our daily struggle to survive takes place against an immense and constantly shifting backdrop...

...moving from natural disaster to terrorist attack... from new diet to new famine... from celebrity sex scandal to political corruption scandal... from religious war to economic miracle... from tantalizing new advertisement to clichés on tv complaining about the government... from suggestions on how to be the ideal lover to suggestions on how to keep sports fans from rioting... from new police shootings to new health problems...

The same processes are at work everywhere... in democratic and in totalitarian governments... in corporations and in mom n' pop businesses... in cheeseburgers and in tofu... in opera, in country music and in hip hop... in every country and in every language... in prisons, in schools, in hospitals, in factories, in office towers, in war zones and in grocery stores. Something is feeding off our lives and spitting back images of them in our faces.

That something is the product of our own activity–our everyday working lives sold hour after hour, week after week, generation after generation. We don't have property or a business we can make money from, so we are forced to sell our time and energy to someone else. We are the modern day working class—the proles.

So we're in a war—a class war. There is no set of ideas, proposals and organizational strategies that can bring victory. There is no solution outside of winning the war.

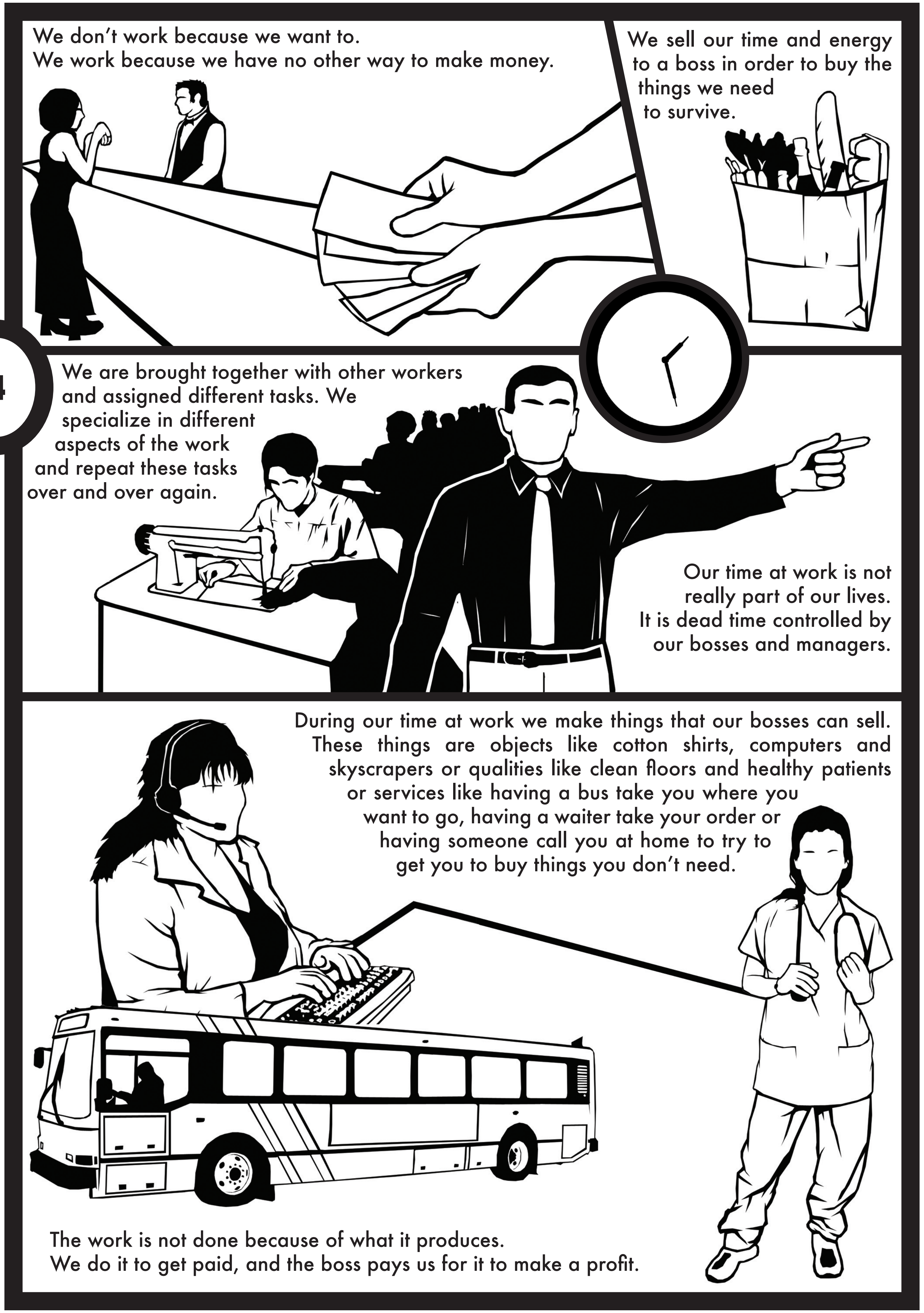
So long as they have the initiative, we are separated, and passive. Our response to the conditions of our lives is individual: quitting our jobs, moving to neighborhoods with cheaper rent, joining subcultures and gangs, suicide, buying lottery tickets, drug abuse and alcoholism, going to church.

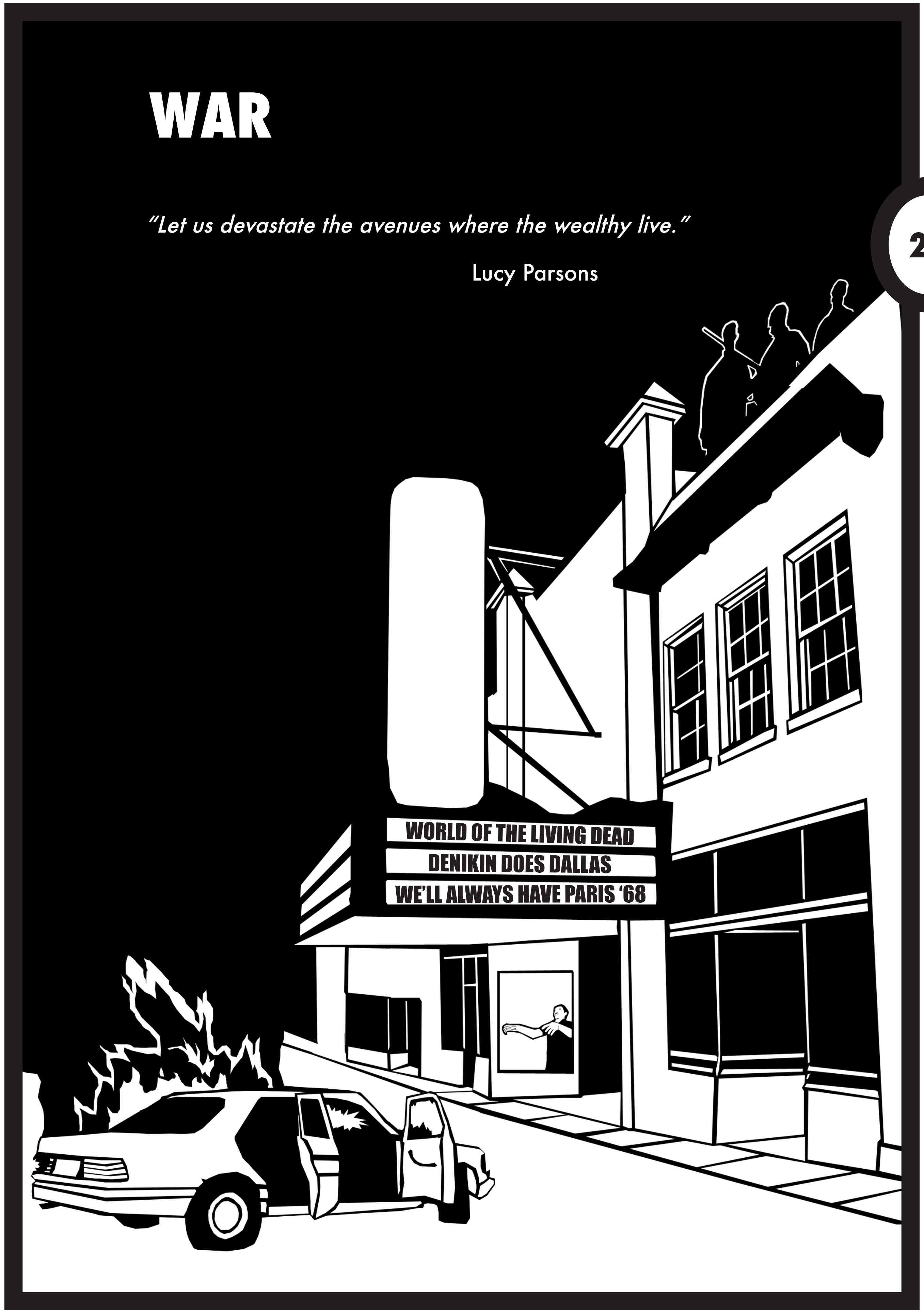
Their world looks like the only possibility. Any hope for change is lived on an imaginary level—separated from our everyday lives. It's business as usual, with all the crisis and destruction that this implies.

WORK

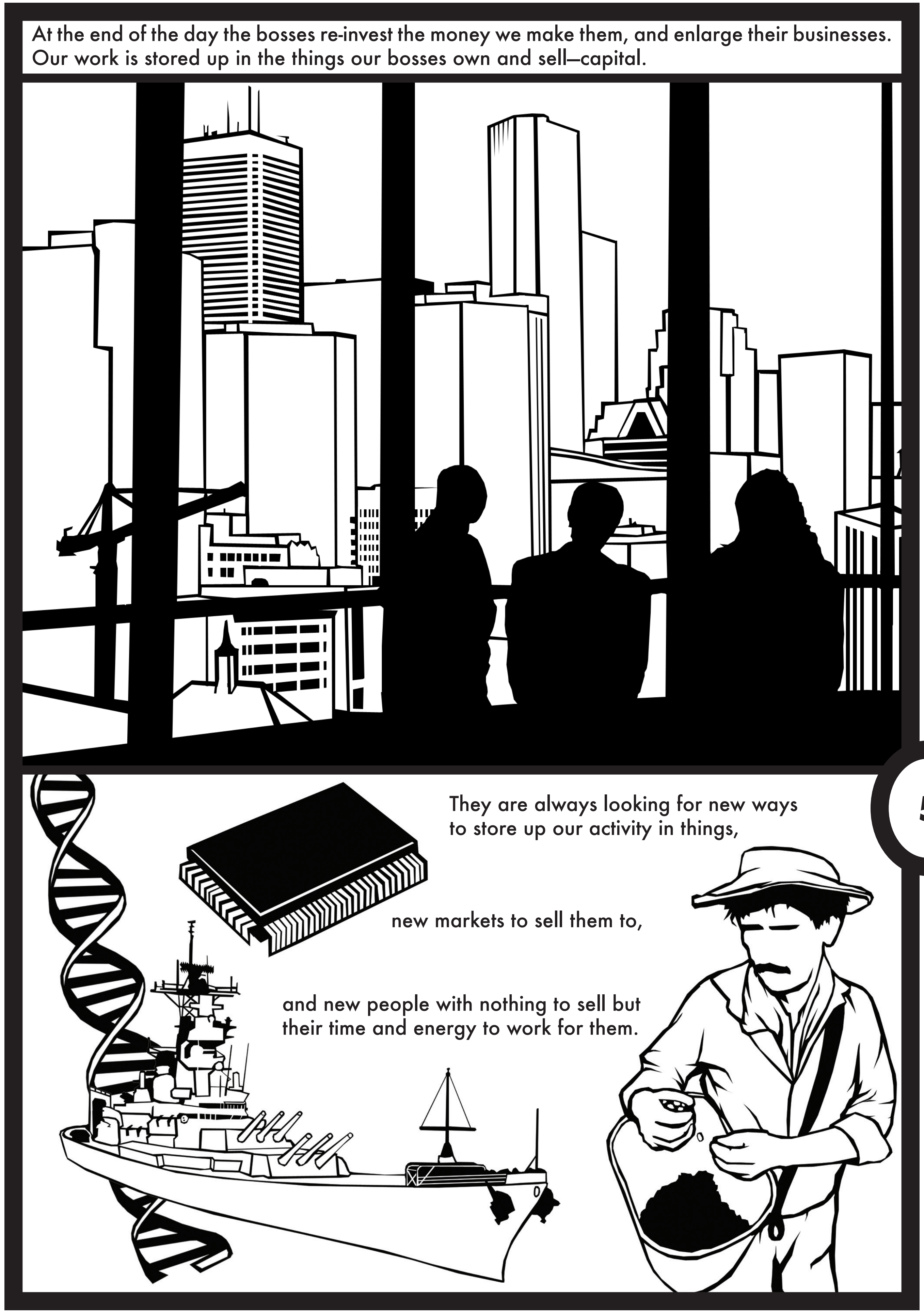
"Capital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks."

Karl Marx


We don't work because we want to.
We work because we have no other way to make money.
We sell our time and energy to a boss in order to buy the things we need to survive.
We are brought together with other workers and assigned different tasks. We specialize in different aspects of the work and repeat these tasks over and over again.
Our time at work is not really part of our lives.
It is dead time controlled by our bosses and managers.
During our time at work we make things that our bosses can sell. These things are objects like cotton shirts, computers and skyscrapers or qualities like clean floors and healthy patients or services like having a bus take you where you want to go, having a waiter take your order or having someone call you at home to try to get you to buy things you don't need.
The work is not done because of what it produces.
We do it to get paid, and the boss pays us for it to make a profit.

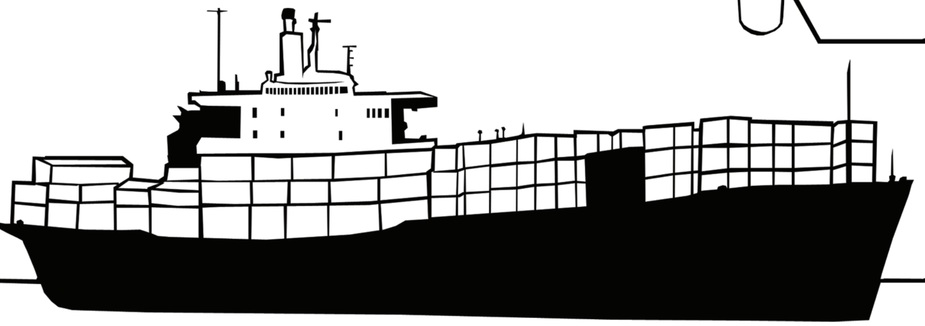

WAR
"Let us devastate the avenues where the wealthy live."
Lucy Parsons
WORLD OF THE LIVING DEAD
DENIKIN DOES DALLAS
WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE PARIS '68

When we start to fight against the conditions of our lives, a completely different kind of activity appears. We do not look for a politician to come change things for us. We do it ourselves, with other working class people. Whenever this kind of working class resistance breaks out, politicians try to extinguish it in a flood of petitions, lobbying and election campaigns. But when we are fighting for ourselves, our activity looks completely different from theirs.
We take property away from landlords and use it for ourselves. We use militant tactics against our bosses and end up fighting with the police. We form groups where everyone takes part in the activity, and there is no division between leaders and followers. We do not fight for our leaders, for our bosses or for our country.
We fight for ourselves.
This is not the ultimate form of democracy. We are imposing our needs on society without debate—needs that are directly contrary to the interests and wishes of rich people everywhere. There is no way for us to speak on equal terms with this society.
This tendency of working class struggles to go outside and against the government and politics, and to create new forms of organization that do not put our faith in anything other than our own ability, has at times been called "anarchism".


At the end of the day the bosses re-invest the money we make them, and enlarge their businesses. Our work is stored up in the things our bosses own and sell—capital.
They are always looking for new ways to store up our activity in things,
new markets to sell them to,
and new people with nothing to sell but their time and energy to work for them.

What we get from work is enough money to pay for rent, food, clothes and beer—enough to keep us coming back to work. When we're not at work, we spend time traveling to or from work, preparing for work, resting up because we're exhausted from work or getting drunk to forget about work.

The only thing worse than work, is not having it. Then we waste our weeks away looking for work, without getting paid for it. If welfare is available, it is a pain-in-the-ass to get and is never as much as working. The constant threat of unemployment is what keeps us going to work everyday.



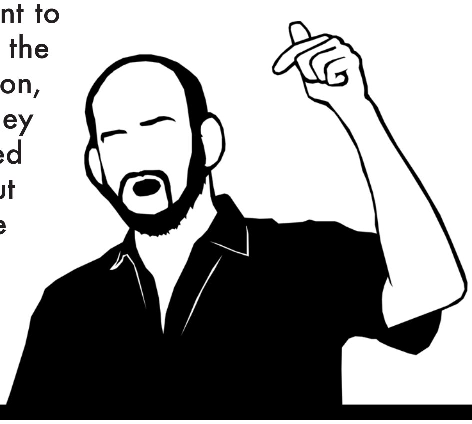
And our work is the basis of this society. The power our bosses get from it expands every time we work. It is the dominant force in every country in the world.

ANTI-POLITICS

"Anarchism is not a beautiful utopia, nor an abstract philosophical idea, it is a social movement of the labouring masses."

Dyelo Truda Group

Unfortunately, politics also exists outside of government. Community leaders, professional activists and unions want to place themselves between workers and bosses and be the mediators, the negotiators, the means of communication, the representatives, and ultimately the peacemakers. They fight to keep this position. In order to do that, they need to mobilize the working class in controlled ways to put pressure on more business-oriented politicians, at the same time offering business a workforce that is ready to work. This means that they have to disperse us when we start to fight back. Sometimes they do this by negotiating concessions, other times by selling us out.



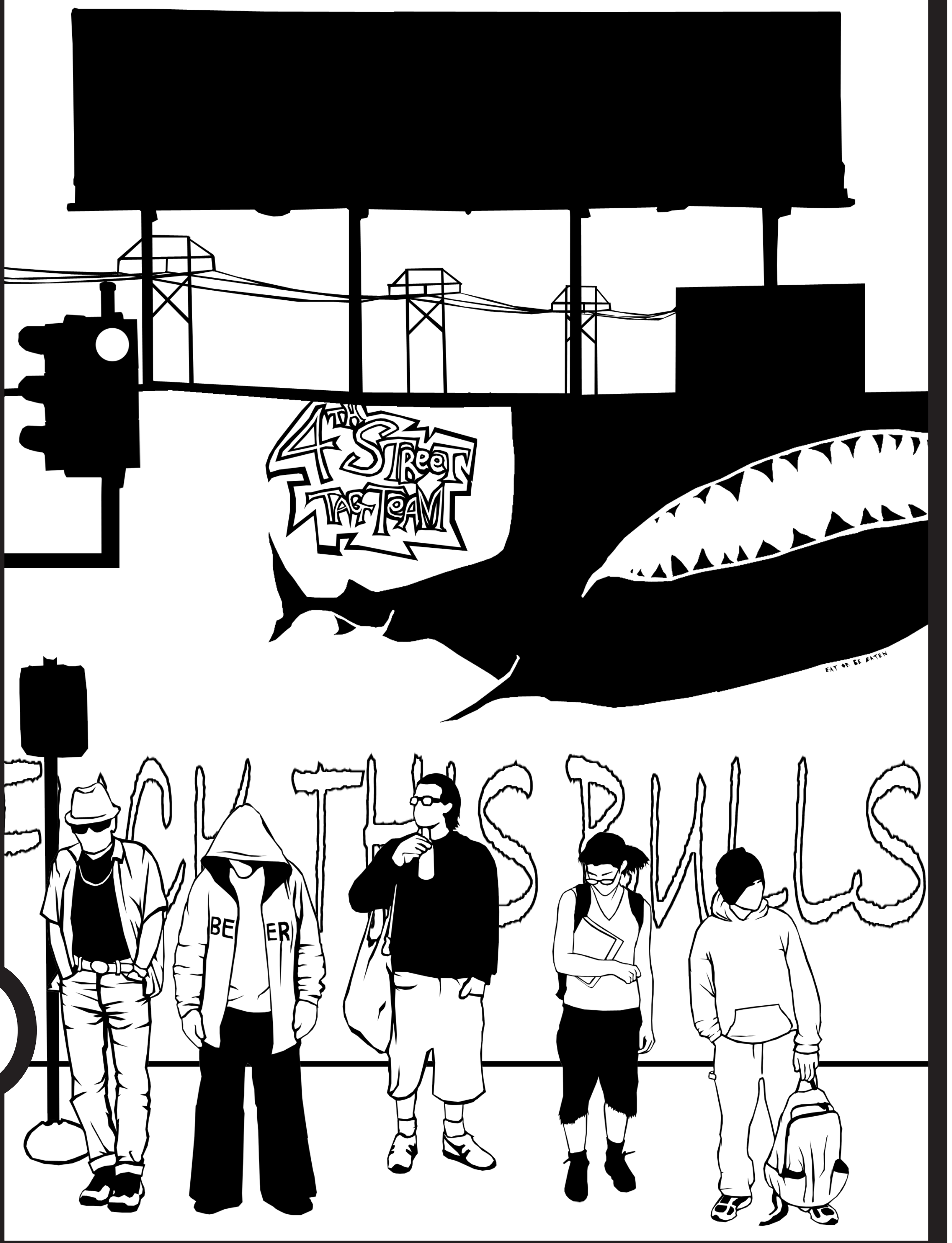
Politicians always call on us to vote, to sit back and let the organizer negotiate, to fall in line behind the leaders and the specialists in a kind of passive participation. These non-governmental politicians offer the government a way to maintain the status quo peacefully, and in return they get jobs managing our misery.

Political groups are bureaucratic. They tend to mirror the structures of work, where activity is controlled from the outside. They create specialists in politics. They are built on a division between leaders and led, between representatives and represented, between organizers and organized. This is not a bad choice of how to set up organizations, to be remedied with a large dose of participatory democracy. It is a direct result of what political groups and activities are trying to do–to manage a part of capitalism.

The only thing that interests us about politics is its destruction.

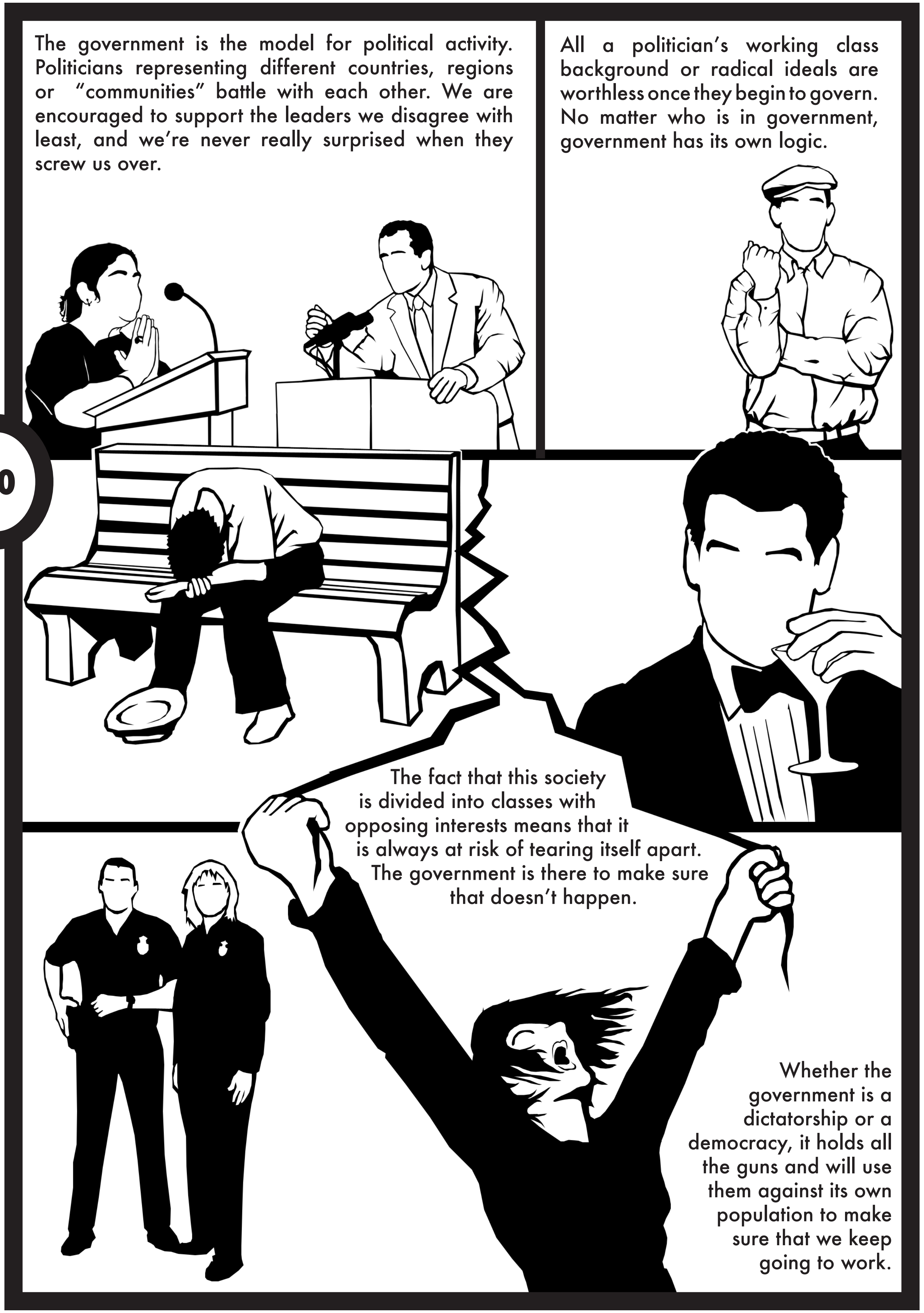
At work we are under the control of our bosses, and of the markets they sell to. But an invisible hand imposes a work-like discipline and pointlessness on the rest of our lives as well. Life seems like a kind of show we watch from the outside, but have no control over.

All sorts of other activities tend to become as alienating, boring and stressful as work: housework, schoolwork, leisure. That's capitalism.



Not that long ago, an extremely unstable situation in a particular country could be diffused by nationalizing all of a country's industries, creating a police state, and calling it "communism". This kind of capitalism proved to be less efficient and less flexible than good old-fashioned free market capitalism. With the fall of the Soviet Union, there is no longer a Red Army to march in and stabilize countries in this way, and Communist parties around the world are becoming simple social democrats.

A working class political party is a contradiction in terms–not because the membership of a particular party can't be largely working class, but because the most it can do is give the working class a voice in politics. It lets our representatives put forward ideas on how our bosses should run this society–how they can make money and keep us under control. Whether they are advocating nationalization or privatization, more welfare or more police (or both), the programs of political parties are different strategies for managing capitalism.



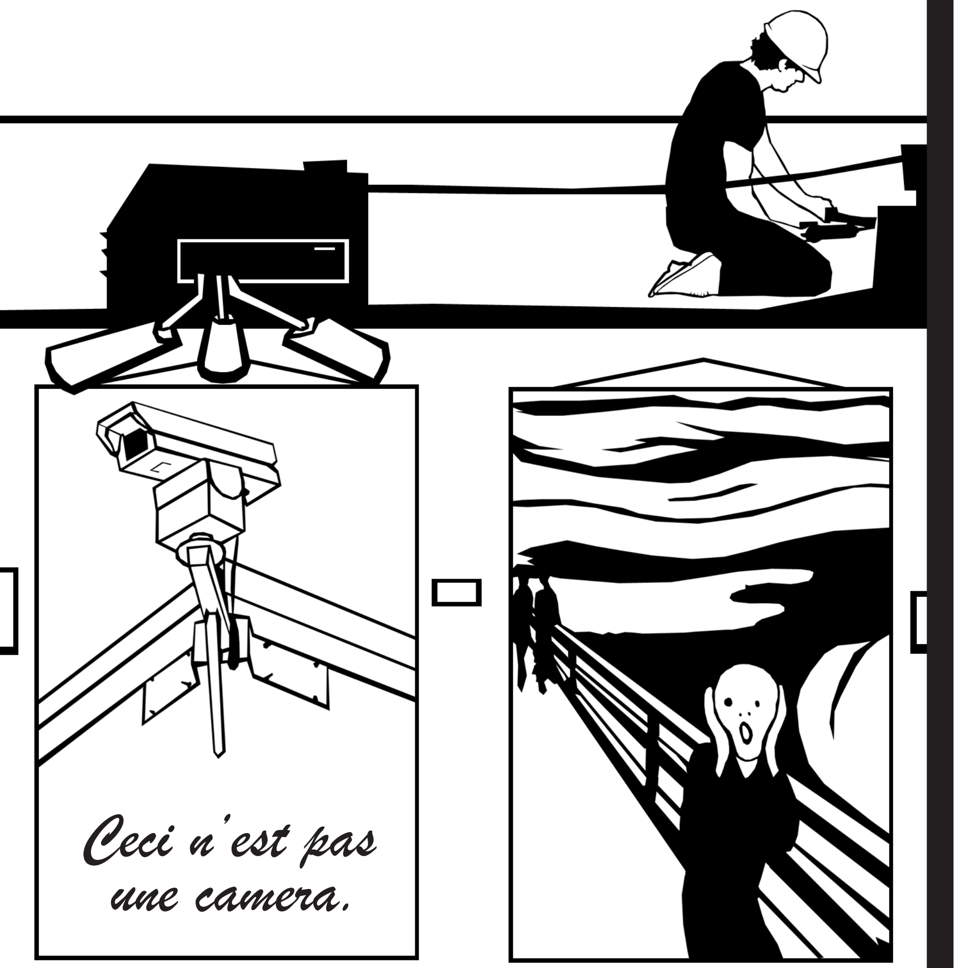
ANTI-WORK

"Of course, the capitalists are very much satisfied with the capitalist system. Why shouldn't they be? They get rich by it."

Alexander Berkman

Work is experienced very differently depending on which side of it you're on. For our bosses, work is the way that they get their money to make more money. For us, work is a miserable way to survive. The less they pay us, the less we make. The faster they can get us to work, the harder we have to work.

Our interests are opposed, and there is a constant struggle between bosses and workers at work—and in the rest of the society based on work. The more we pay in rent or bus fare, the more we have to work to pay our rent or bus fare.



The current state of wages, benefits, hours and working conditions as well as politics, art and technology is a result of the current state of this class struggle. Simply standing up for our own interests in this struggle, is the starting point of undermining capitalism.

POLITICS

"The more we are governed, the less we are free."

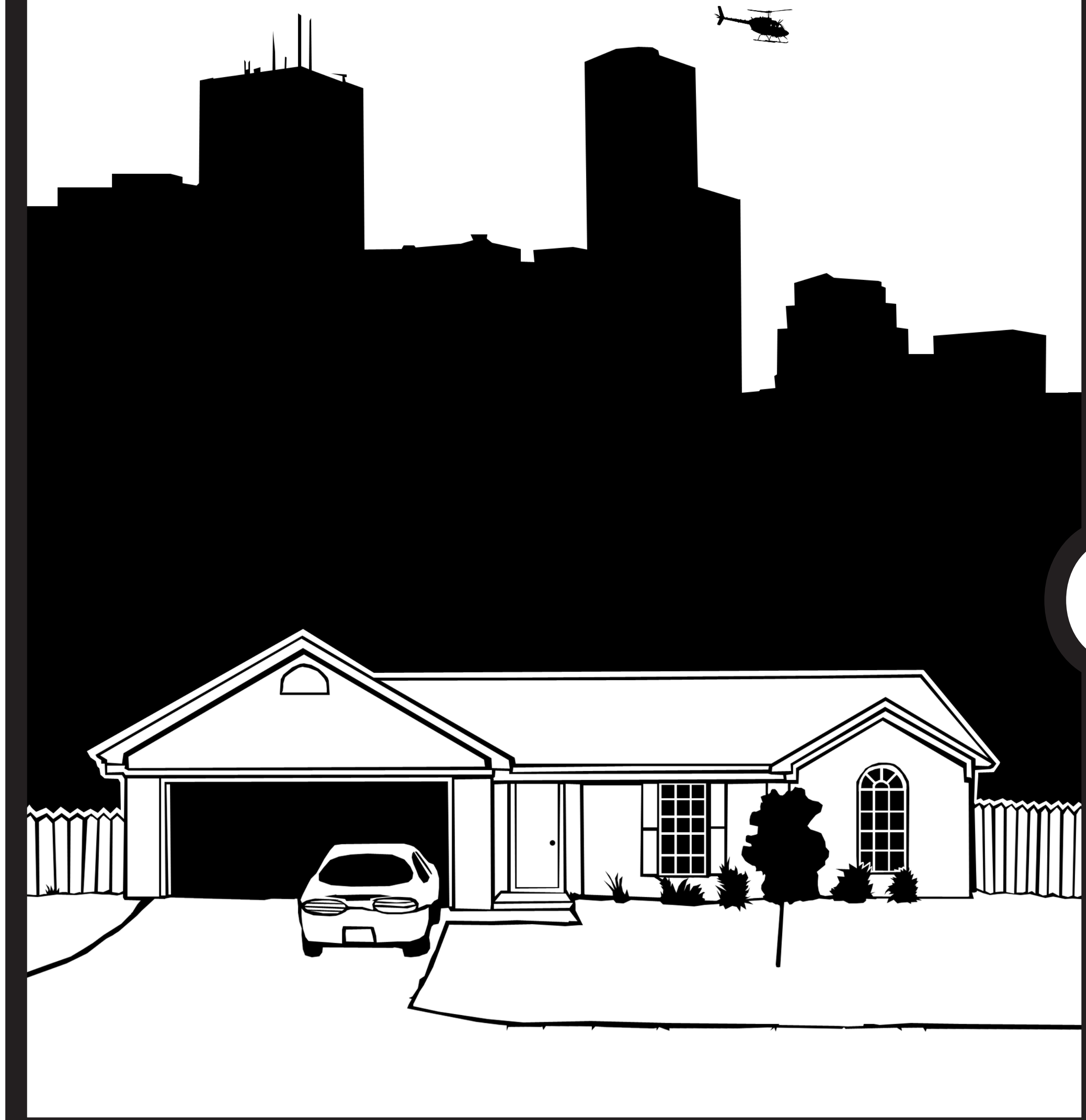
The Alarm

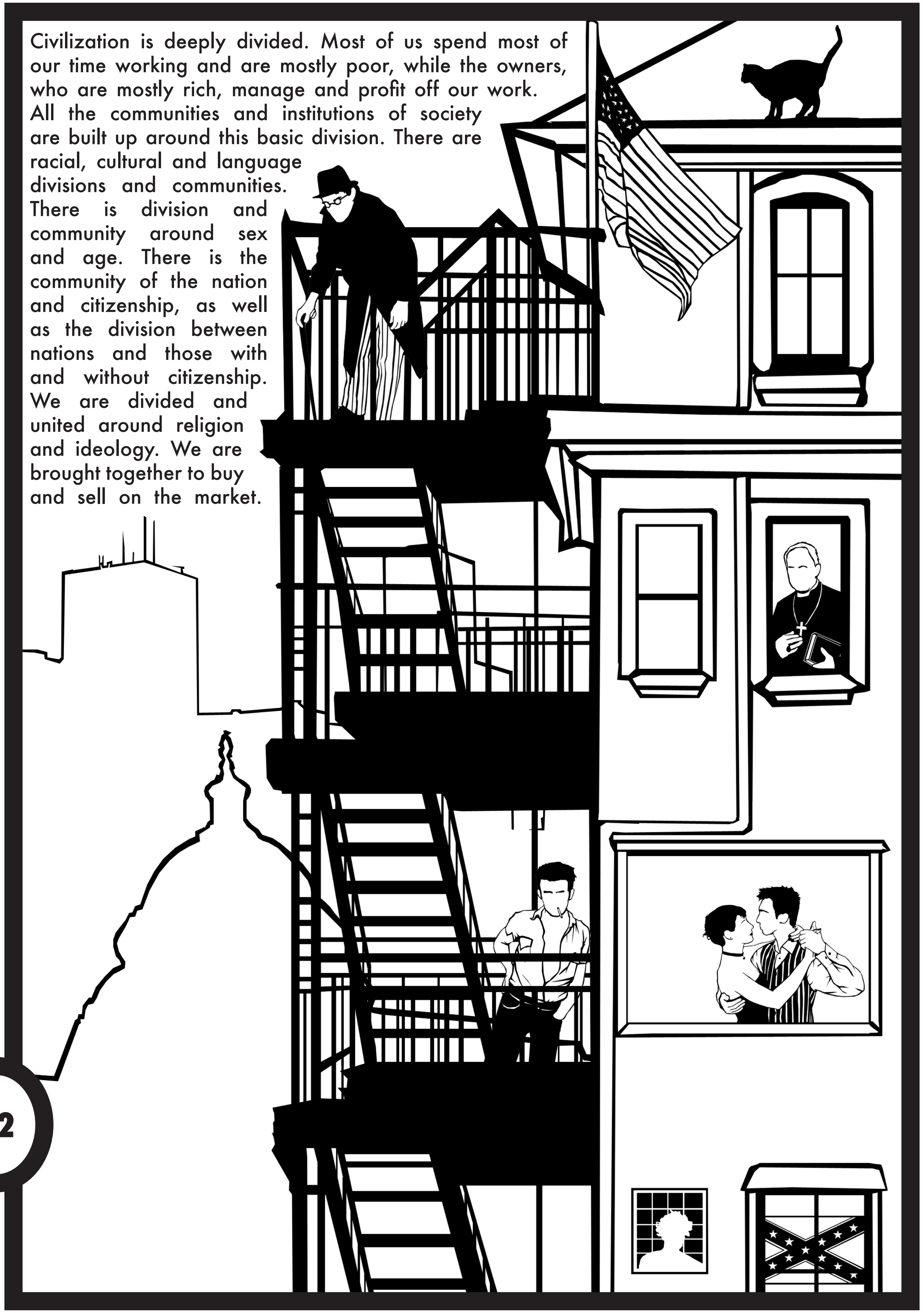
This tendency to create community by fighting against the conditions of our lives—and therefore against work, money, exchange, borders, nations, governments, police, religion, and race—has at times been called "communism".

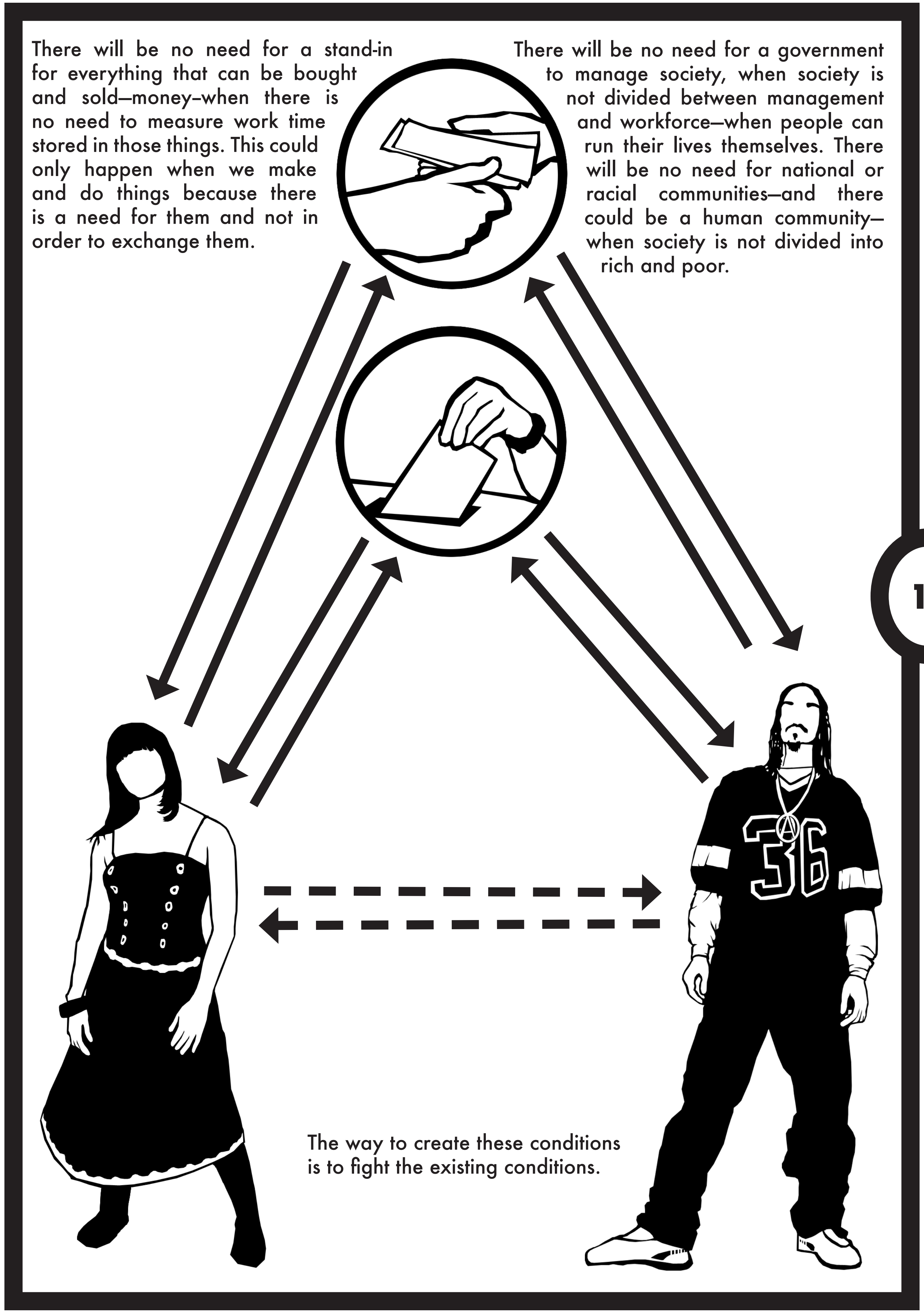
COMMUNITY

"Well, it is about time that every rebel wakes up to the fact that 'the people' and the working class have nothing in common."

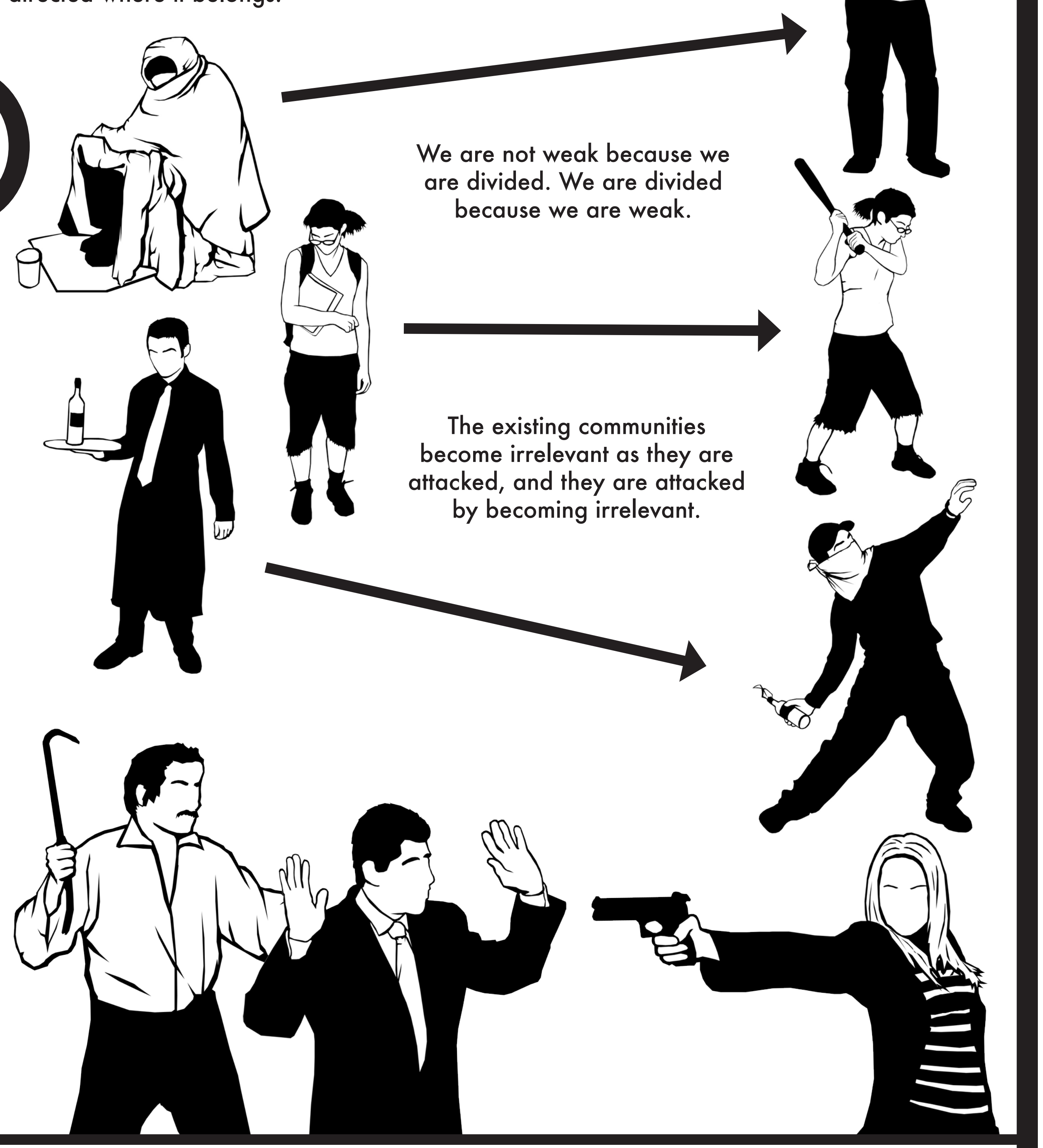
Joe Hill




Civilization is deeply divided. Most of us spend most of our time working and are mostly poor, while the owners, who are mostly rich, manage and profit off our work. All the communities and institutions of society are built up around this basic division. There are racial, cultural and language divisions and communities. There is division and community around sex and age. There is the community of the nation and citizenship, as well as the division between nations and those with and without citizenship. We are divided and united around religion and ideology. We are brought together to buy and sell on the market.


There will be no need for a stand-in for everything that can be bought and sold—money–when there is no need to measure work time stored in those things. This could only happen when we make and do things because there is a need for them and not in order to exchange them.
There will be no need for a government to manage society, when society is not divided between management and workforce—when people can run their lives themselves. There will be no need for national or racial communities—and there could be a human community—when society is not divided into rich and poor.
The way to create these conditions is to fight the existing conditions.

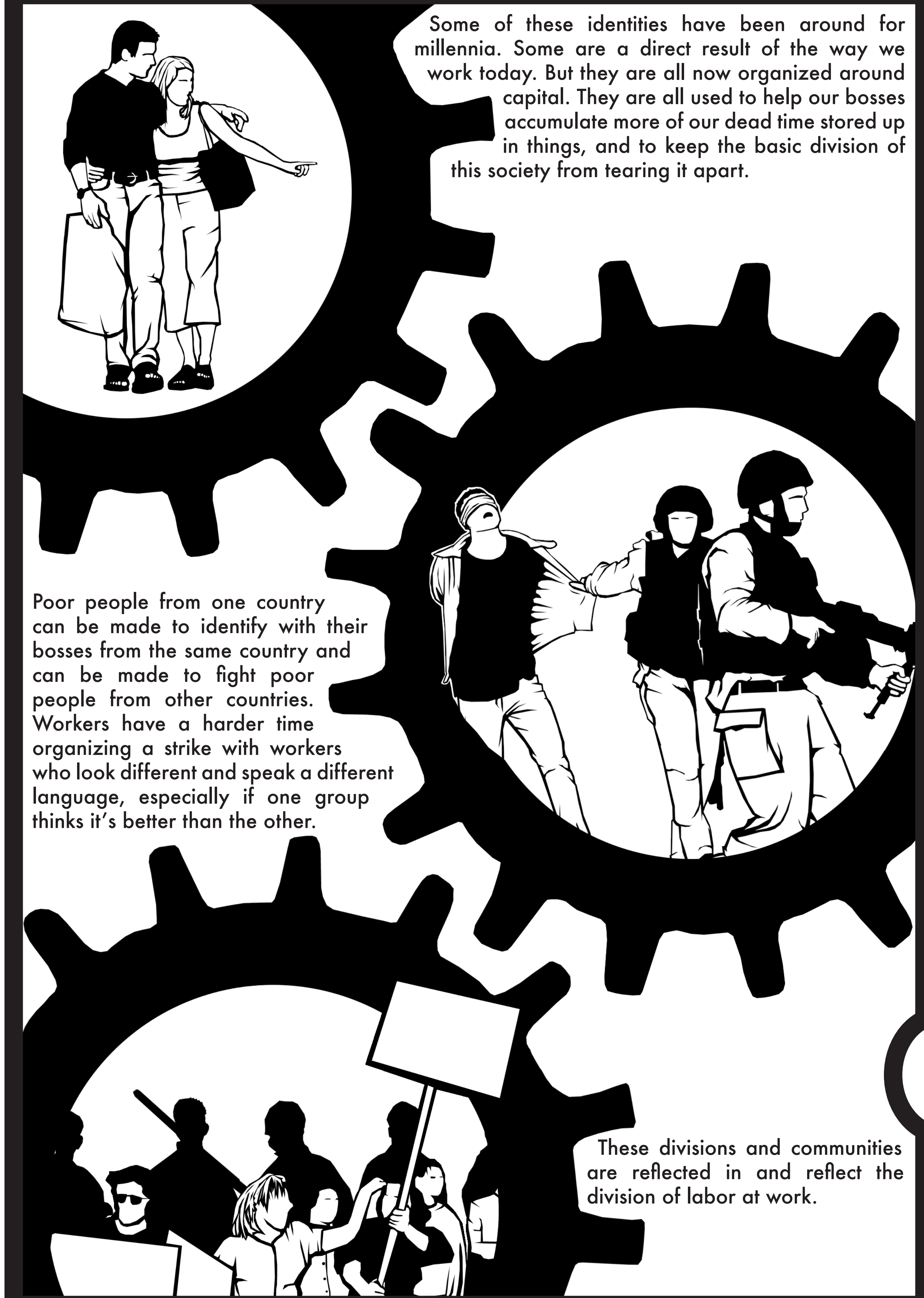
They organize us against each other, but we can organize ourselves against them. The whole point of talking about class and "the proles" is to insist on the very basic way in which people from different "communities" have essentially similar experiences, and to show that people from the same "communities" should in fact hate each other. This is the starting point to fighting the existing communities. When we begin to fight for our own interests we see that others are doing the same thing. Prejudices fall away, and our anger is directed where it belongs.



We are not weak because we are divided. We are divided because we are weak.

The existing communities become irrelevant as they are attacked, and they are attacked by becoming irrelevant.

Racism and sexism are unappealing, when working men and women of different races are fighting their class enemies side by side. And that fight becomes more effective by involving people from different "communities".



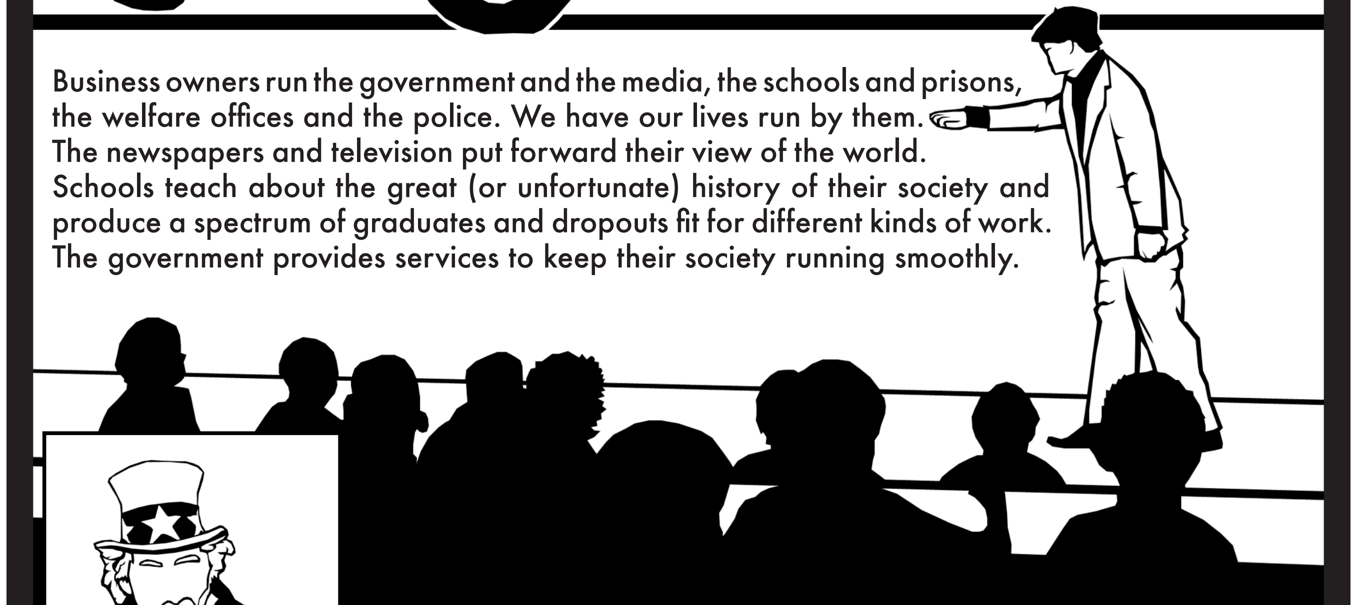
Some of these identities have been around for millennia. Some are a direct result of the way we work today. But they are all now organized around capital. They are all used to help our bosses accumulate more of our dead time stored up in things, and to keep the basic division of this society from tearing it apart.

Poor people from one country can be made to identify with their bosses from the same country and can be made to fight poor people from other countries. Workers have a harder time organizing a strike with workers who look different and speak a different language, especially if one group thinks it's better than the other.

These divisions and communities are reflected in and reflect the division of labor at work.

While these divisions and exclusive communities are being pushed on us from one side, an all-inclusive human community is sold to us from the other. This community is just as imaginary and false. It denies the basic division of society.

Business owners run the government and the media, the schools and prisons, the welfare offices and the police. We have our lives run by them.
The newspapers and television put forward their view of the world.
Schools teach about the great (or unfortunate) history of their society and produce a spectrum of graduates and dropouts fit for different kinds of work.
The government provides services to keep their society running smoothly.



And when all else fails, they have the police, the prisons and the army.

This is not our community.

ANTI-COMMUNITY

"Such power as the bourgeoisie still possesses in this period resides in the proletariat's lack of autonomy and independence of spirit."

Anton Pannekoek